

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Billings Field Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, Montana 59101-4669
www.blm.gov/mt



In Reply Refer To:
1610 (MT010.CSB)

June 1, 2015

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the Proposed Resource Management Plan (PRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared the PRMP/FEIS in consultation with cooperating agencies, taking into account public comments received during this planning effort. The PRMP provides a framework for the future management direction and appropriate use of the Billings Field Office planning area, located in Big Horn (portions), Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, and Yellowstone Counties, Montana, and 4,298 acres in Big Horn County, Wyoming. The document contains both land use planning decisions and implementation decisions to guide the BLM's management of the Billings Field Office planning area.

This PRMP/FEIS is one of 15 sub-regional planning efforts being conducted as part of the BLM's National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy. The PRMP identifies conservation measures to conserve, enhance and/or restore Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) habitat in response to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) March 2010 "warranted, but precluded" Endangered Species Act listing petition. The USFWS found that the inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms was identified as a significant threat to GRSG in their finding on the petition to list the GRSG. The RMP conservation measures were identified as the BLM's principal regulatory mechanism.

This PRMP and FEIS have been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended. The PRMP is largely based on Alternative D, the preferred alternative in the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/DEIS), which was released on March 29, 2013. The PRMP/FEIS contains the Proposed Plan, a summary of changes made between the DRMP/DEIS and PRMP/FEIS, impacts of the Proposed Plan, a summary of the written and verbal comments received during the public review period for the DRMP/DEIS, and responses to the comments.

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the planning process for this PRMP, and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the planning decisions, may protest approval of the planning decisions within 30 days from date the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes the Notice of Availability of the FEIS in the Federal Register. For further information on filing a protest, please see the accompanying protest regulations in the pages that follow (labeled as Attachment 1). The regulations specify the required elements of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents or available planning records (e.g. meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence, etc.).

Emailed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular mail or overnight delivery postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the emailed protest as an advance

copy and will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct emailed protests to protest@blm.gov.

All protests must be in writing and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail:

Director (210)

Attn: Protest Coordinator

P.O. Box 71383

Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Delivery:

Director (210)

Attn: Protest Coordinator

20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM

Washington, D.C. 20003

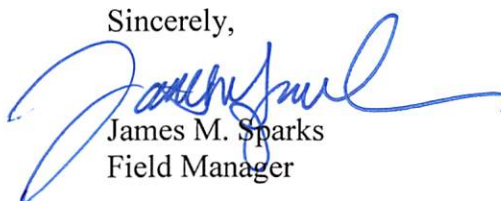
Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your protest, be advised that your entire protest – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your protest to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior on each protest. Responses to protest issues will be compiled and formalized in a Director's Protest Resolution Report made available following issuance of the decisions.

Upon resolution of all land use plan protests, the BLM will issue an Approved RMP and Record of Decision (ROD). The Approved RMP and ROD will be mailed or made available electronically to all who participated in the planning process and will be available on the BLM website at <http://on.doi.gov/1EJBdaE>.

Unlike land use planning decisions, implementation decisions included in this PRMP/FEIS are not subject to protest under the BLM planning regulations, but are subject to an administrative review process, through appeals to the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) pursuant to 43 CFR, Part 4 Subpart E. Implementation decisions generally constitute the BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. Where implementation decisions are made as part of the land use planning process, they are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations once the BLM resolves the protests to land use planning decisions and issues an Approved RMP and ROD. The Approved RMP and ROD will, therefore, identify the implementation decisions made in the plan that may be appealed to the Office of Hearing and Appeals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James M. Sparks", is written over the typed name and title.

James M. Sparks
Field Manager

Enclosure

1-Protest Regulations

Protest Regulations

[CITE: 43CFR1610.5-2]

TITLE 43--PUBLIC LANDS: INTERIOR
CHAPTER II--BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PART 1600--PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING--Table of Contents
Subpart 1610--Resource Management Planning
Sec. 1610.5-2 Protest Procedures.

- (a) Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.
- (1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Director. The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the plan or amendment in the Federal Register. For an amendment not requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the protest shall be filed within 30 days of the publication of the notice of its effective date.
- (2) The protest shall contain:
 - (i) The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest;
 - (ii) A statement of the issue or issues being protested;
 - (iii) A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;
 - (iv) A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and
 - (v) A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.
- (3) The Director shall promptly render a decision on the protest.
- (b) The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons for the decision. The decision shall be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

**Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument
Proposed Resource Management Plan
and
Final Environmental Impact Statement**

1. Responsible Agency:

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

2. Draft () Final (X)

3. Type of Action: Administrative (X) Legislative ()

4. Abstract: This Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes and analyzes four alternatives for the planning and management of public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Billings Field Office located in south central Montana in Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, and Yellowstone counties, Montana, and portions of Big Horn County, Montana, and portions of Big Horn County, Wyoming. These alternatives are Alternative A (continuation of current management or the No Action Alternative); Alternatives B and C, and Alternative D (Proposed Alternative). Major RMP issues include managing for desired plant communities; maintaining or improving wildlife and fisheries habitat and controlling invasive species; conservation and recovery of threatened, endangered, proposed and sensitive species; identifying availability of public lands for commercial activities and managing commercial activities while protecting the integrity of other resources; managing recreation activities to meet public demand while protecting natural and cultural resources and providing for visitor safety; resolving conflicts between motorized and non-motorized uses and addressing effects to resources from motorized use; identifying areas requiring special management and providing management direction for those areas; addressing social and economic conditions; protecting the cultural and historic values at Pompeys Pillar National Monument; and managing the recreation and visitor services at Pompeys Pillar National Monument. The Alternatives present a range of management actions to achieve goals and desired future conditions for the Billings Field Office and Pompeys Pillar National Monument.

5. Protests on the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement must be received within 30days from publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The close of the protest period will be announced in a news release and on the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP website at: <http://on.doi.gov/1EJBdaE>

6. For further information, contact:

Billings Field Office, Bureau of Land Management
RMP Team Lead, Carolyn Sherve-Bybee
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, MT 59101
406-896-5234

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Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument

Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

List of Acronyms

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List of Acronyms

Acronym or Abbreviation	Full Phrase
ACEC	area of critical environmental concern
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	American with Disabilities Act
AFMSS	Automated Fluid Mineral Support System
AFY	acre – feet per year
AML ₁	appropriate management level
AML ₂	abandoned mine lands
AMP	allotment management plan
AMR	appropriate management response
AMS	analysis of the management situation
amsl	above mean sea level
ANS	aquatic nuisance species
AO	authorized officer
APLIC	Avian Protection Plan guidelines
APD	application for permit to drill
APE	area of potential effect
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
APHIS-WS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services
AQ	air quality
AQI	air quality index
AQRV	air quality related values
AQTW	Air Quality Technical Workgroup
ARMP	Air Resource Management Plan
ARTSD	Air Resource Technical Support Document
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
AU	assessment units
AUM	animal unit month
BA	biological assessment
BACT	Best Available Control Technology
BBM	benefits based management
BCNRA	Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

BEA	Bureau of Economic Analysis
BIA	US Dept of the Interior – Bureau of Indian Affairs
BiFO	Billings Field Office
BLM	US Dept of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management
BMPs	best management practices
BO	biological opinion
BOR	US Dept of the Interior – Bureau of Reclamation
BPS	budget planning system
C & MU	Classification and Multiple Use Act
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAPS	crucial area planning system used by MT FWP
CBNG	coalbed natural gas
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
COA	conditions of approval
COT	Conservation Objectives Team (GRSG)
CSP	Concentrating Solar Power
CSU	controlled surface use
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
CWMA	Cooperative Weed Management Area
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality (Montana)
DFC	Desired Future Condition
DNA	Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and National NEPA Adequacy
DNRC	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
DOI	Department of the Interior
DR	decision record
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
EO	Executive Order

EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
EPCA	Energy Policy and Conservation Act Amendments of 2000
ERMA	extensive recreation management area
ES	executive summary
ESA	Endangered Species Act of 1973
ESR	emergency stabilization and rehabilitation
EVT	existing vegetation type
° F	degrees Fahrenheit
FAR	functioning at risk
FAR-D	functioning at risk downward trend
FAR-NA	functioning at risk not apparent trend
FAR-NF	functioning at risk not functioning
FAR-U	functioning at risk upward trend
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FLTFA	Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act
FMP	fire management plan
FMU	fire management unit
FMUD	final multiple use decision
FO	field office
FOFEM	first order fire effects model
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FPA	Federal Power Act
FPA	fire program analysis
FPPA	Farmland Policy Protection Act
FR	Federal Register
FRCC	fire regime condition class
FWFMP	Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy
FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
FY	fiscal year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GAWS	general aquatic wildlife survey
GHMA	general habitat management area

GHG	greenhouse gas
GIS	geographical information system
GPS	global positioning system
GRSG	Greater Sage-Grouse
HA	herd area
HAP	hazardous air pollution
HCP	habitat conservation plan
HFA	Healthy Forest Initiative
HFRA	Healthy Forest Restoration Act
HMA	herd management area
HMAP	herd management area plan
HMP	habitat management plan
HUA	herd use area
HVH	high value habitat
I -	Interstate
IB	information bulletin
IBA	important bird area
IBLA	Interior Board of Land Appeals
IDT	interdisciplinary team
IM	instruction memorandum
IMP	interim management policy
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IR	Indian Reservation
ISA	instant study area
ITA	Indian Trust Assets
ITRR	Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana
IWM	integrated weed management
LAC	limits of acceptable change
LANDFIRE	Landscape Fire and Resource Management Planning Tools Project
LBA	lease by application

LCNHT / L&CNHT	Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
LHA	land health assessment
LN	lease notice
LS	lease stipulation
LTA	land tenure adjustment
LUP	land use plan
LWC	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
MAAQS	Montana Ambient Air Quality Standards
MACT	maximum available control technology
mbf	thousand board feet
mcf	thousand cubic feet
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MDEQ	Montana Department of Environmental Quality
MEI	maximally exposed individual
MFISH	Montana Fish Information System
MIST	minimum impact suppression tactics
MLE	most likely exposure
MLP	Master Leasing Plan
MLRA	Major Land Resource Area
mmbf	million board feet
mmcf	million cubic feet
MOA	memorandum of agreement
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MNHP	Montana Natural Heritage Program
MSIP	Montana State Implementation Plan
MT	Montana
MTFWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
mtpy	metric tons per year
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NCDC	National Climatic Data Center
NDVI	Normalized Difference Vegetation Index
NEI	National Emission Inventory
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NESHAPS	National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NF	non functional
NFP	National Fire Plan of 2000
NGO	non-government organization
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHT	National Historic Trail
NISMS	National Invasive Species Information Management System
NLCS	National Landscape Conservation System
NM	National Monument
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NNL	National Natural Landmark
NOA	Notice of Availability
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOI	Notice of Intent
NO _x	mono-nitrogen oxides NO and NO ₂
NPNHT	Nez Perce National Historic Trail
NPS	National Park Service
nps	nonpoint source
NRCS	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
NREL	U.S. DOE National Renewable Energy Laboratory
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRS	natural resource specialist
NSR	new source review
NSPS	new source performance standards
NSO	no surface occupancy
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
NWReGAP	Northwest Regional Gap Analysis Project
NWSRS	National Wild and Scenic River System
O ₃	ozone
O&G	oil and gas
OHV	off-highway vehicle
OHV EIS	Off-Highway Vehicle Environmental Impact Statement

ORP	Outdoor Recreation Planner
ORV	outstanding remarkable value
OSV	over snow vehicle
PAC	priority areas for conservation
Pb	lead
PDM	Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan
PE	chemical and biological control
PEIS	preliminary environmental impact statement
PFC	proper functioning condition
PFYC	potential fossil yield classification
PGM	photochemical grid modeling
PILT	payment in lieu of taxes
PL	public law
PLO	public land office
PM	particulate matter
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter
PM ₁₀	particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in diameter
PMU	population management unit
PMWHR	Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range
ppm	part per million
PPMN	Pompeys Pillar National Monument
PRPA	Paleontological Resources Protection Act
PPA	protection priority area (sage grouse)
PS	public health and safety
PSD	prevention of significant deterioration
PSQ	probable sale quantity
PV	photovoltaics
R & PP	Recreation and Public Purposes Act
R & VS	Recreation and Visitor Services
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RAMS	risk assessment and mitigation strategy
REIS	Regional Economic Information System
RELs	Reference Exposure Levels
RfCs	Reference Concentrations

RFD	reasonably foreseeable development
RFDS	reasonably foreseeable development scenario
RIP	range improvement project
RMIS	recreation management information system
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMS	rangeland management specialist
RMZ	recreation management zone
RNA	research natural area
ROD	record of decision
ROI	region of influence
ROS	recreation opportunity spectrum
ROW	right-of-way
RA	restoration area (sage grouse)
RPS	Rangeland Program Summary Record of Decision (ROD)
SASEM	Simple Approach Smoke Estimation Model
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
S & G	Standards and Guides
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SLT	standard lease term
SO ₂	sulphur dioxide
SOC	species of concern
SOP	standard operating procedure
SMRA	special recreation management area
SMZ	stream management zone
SPE	Signal Peak Energy
SRP	special recreation permit
SSP	special status plants
SSS	special status species
T & E	threatened and endangered
TC	tribal consultation
TCP	traditional cultural property
TDS	total dissolved solids
TL	timing limitation
TM	transportation and travel management

TMA	travel management area
TMDL	total maximum daily load
TNEB	thriving natural ecological balance
TNR	temporary nonrenewable
TPS	Total Petroleum Systems
tpy	short tons per year
TSP	total suspended particles
TSS	total suspended solids
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
URF	Unit Risk Factors
US	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDI	United States Department of the Interior
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	US Dept of Agriculture, Forest Service
USFWS	US Dept of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	US Dept of the Interior, Geological Service
VF	vegetation forest and woodland products
VOCs	volatile organic compounds
VRI	visual resource inventory
VRM	visual resource management
WA	wilderness area
WAAQS	Wyoming Ambient Air Quality Standards
WAFWA	Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
WDEQ	Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
WDM	wildlife damage assessment
WEG	Wind Erodibility Group
WFDSS	Wildland Fire Decision Support System
WFIP	wildland fire implementation plan
WFM	wildland fire ecology management
WFSA	wildland fire situation analysis
WHB	wild horses and burros

WMA	wildlife management area
WMPP	Wildlife Monitoring and Protection Plan
WSA	wilderness study area
WSR	wild and scenic river
WUI	wildland urban interface
WWCC	Western Wyoming Community College
YCT	Yellowstone cutthroat trout

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the United States (US) Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise or amend its resource management plans (RMP), which guide management of BLM-administered lands. This RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes and analyzes alternatives for the future management of public lands and resources the BLM administers in the Billings Field Office (BiFO) in south-central Montana.

The BLM Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Proposed Plan provides a layered management approach that offers the highest level of protection for Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) in the most valuable habitat. Land use allocations in the Proposed Plan would limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), while minimizing disturbance in General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA). In addition to establishing protective land use allocations, the Proposed Plan would implement a suite of management tools, such as disturbance limits, GRSG habitat objectives and monitoring, mitigation approaches, adaptive management triggers and responses, and other protective measures throughout the range. These overlapping and reinforcing conservation measures will work in concert to improve and restore GRSG habitat condition and provide consistency in how the BLM will manage activities in GRSG habitat in the planning area.

ES.1.1 Rationale and Relationship to the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy

The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP addresses the March 2010 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 12-Month Finding for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) as Threatened or Endangered (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). In that finding, the USFWS concluded that GRSG was “warranted, but precluded” for listing as a threatened or endangered species. A “warranted, but precluded” determination is one of three results that may occur after a petition is filed by the public to list a species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This finding indicates that immediate publication of a proposed rule to list the species is precluded by higher-priority listing proposals; that is, a species should be listed based on the available science, but listing other species takes priority because they are more in need of protection.

The USFWS reviewed the status of and threats to the GRSG in relation to the five listing factors provided in Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA. Of the five listing factors reviewed, the USFWS determined that Factor A, “the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the habitat or range of the GRSG,” and Factor D, “the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms,” posed “a significant threat to the GRSG now and in the foreseeable future” (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). The USFWS identified the principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM as conservation measures in Land Use Plans (LUPs).

The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP is one of the 15 RMP revisions and amendments and environmental impact statements being prepared by the BLM as part of the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy.¹ These documents provide a set of management alternatives focused on specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG (see Figure ES-1 Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy Boundaries).

Science-based decision making and collaboration with state and local partners are fundamental to the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy. The 15 GRSG LUP/EISs address threats to GRSG identified by state fish and wildlife agencies, the BLM National Technical Team, and the USFWS in the context of its listing decision and the Conservation Objectives Team (COT) report. The COT report was prepared by wildlife biologists from state and federal agencies and provides a blueprint for the overall conservation approach set forth in the BLM GRSG LUP/EISs.² Where consistent with conservation objectives, the GRSG LUP/EISs adopt unique state- and stakeholder-developed approaches and priorities. Additional science-based reviews by the US Geological Survey and related scientific literature provided further guidance on specific issues that arose in developing the final BLM and Forest Service GRSG LUP/EISs.

Figure ES-1 Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy Boundaries



¹ BLM (US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management). 2011. Instruction Memorandum 2012-044, BLM National. Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy. Washington, DC. December 27, 2011.

² USFWS (US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service). 2013. Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) Conservation Objectives: Final Report. USFWS, Denver, CO. February 2013.

In addition, regular meetings with the Western Governors Association Sage- Grouse Task Force provided additional opportunities for coordination with member states.³

ES.1.2 Description of the Planning Area and Habitat Management Areas

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM will make decisions during this planning effort. The planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of jurisdiction. The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP planning area covers approximately 10.8 million acres of federal, state, and private lands in Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, and Yellowstone counties in Montana. The BiFO also administers 4,300 acres of public land in Big Horn County, Wyoming. Of the total area, 434,200 acres are BLM-administered surface lands and 889,500 acres are BLM federal mineral estate.

While the planning area consists of all lands regardless of ownership, decisions resulting from the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS would apply only to BLM-administered lands, including surface and split-estate lands with BLM-administered subsurface mineral rights. **Chapter 3**, Affected Environment, describes the current resource and resource use conditions in the planning area.

As part of the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy, GRSG habitat on BLM-administered lands in the decision area consists of lands allocated as PHMA and GHMA (Table ES-1 Habitat Management Areas in the Billings Planning Area, Figure ES-2 Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Areas – Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS). PHMA and GHMA are defined as follows:

- PHMA (158,900 acres): BLM-administered lands identified as having the highest value to maintaining sustainable sage-grouse populations. The boundaries and management strategies for PHMA are derived from and generally follow the Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) boundaries (see **Chapter 3**, Affected Environment) identified in the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS, but may be modified based on the objectives of each alternative. Areas of PHMA largely coincide with areas identified as Priority Areas for Conservation in the COT report.
- GHMA (113,800 acres): BLM-administered lands that require some special management to sustain sage-grouse populations, but that are not as important as PHMA. The boundaries and management strategies for GHMA are derived from and generally follow the Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) boundaries (see **Chapter 3**, Affected Environment) identified in the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS, but may be modified based on the objectives of each alternative.

³ The Western Governors Association Sage-Grouse Task Force works to identify and implement high priority conservation actions and integrate ongoing actions necessary to preclude the need for the GRSG to be listed under the ESA. The Task Force includes designees from the 11 western states where GRSG is found as well as representatives from USFWS, BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Forest Service, United States Geological Survey, and Department of the Interior.

The planning area includes other BLM-administered lands that are not allocated as habitat management areas for GRSG. These lands would be managed as described in Chapter 2 of the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS.

Table ES-1 Habitat Management Areas in the Billings Planning Area

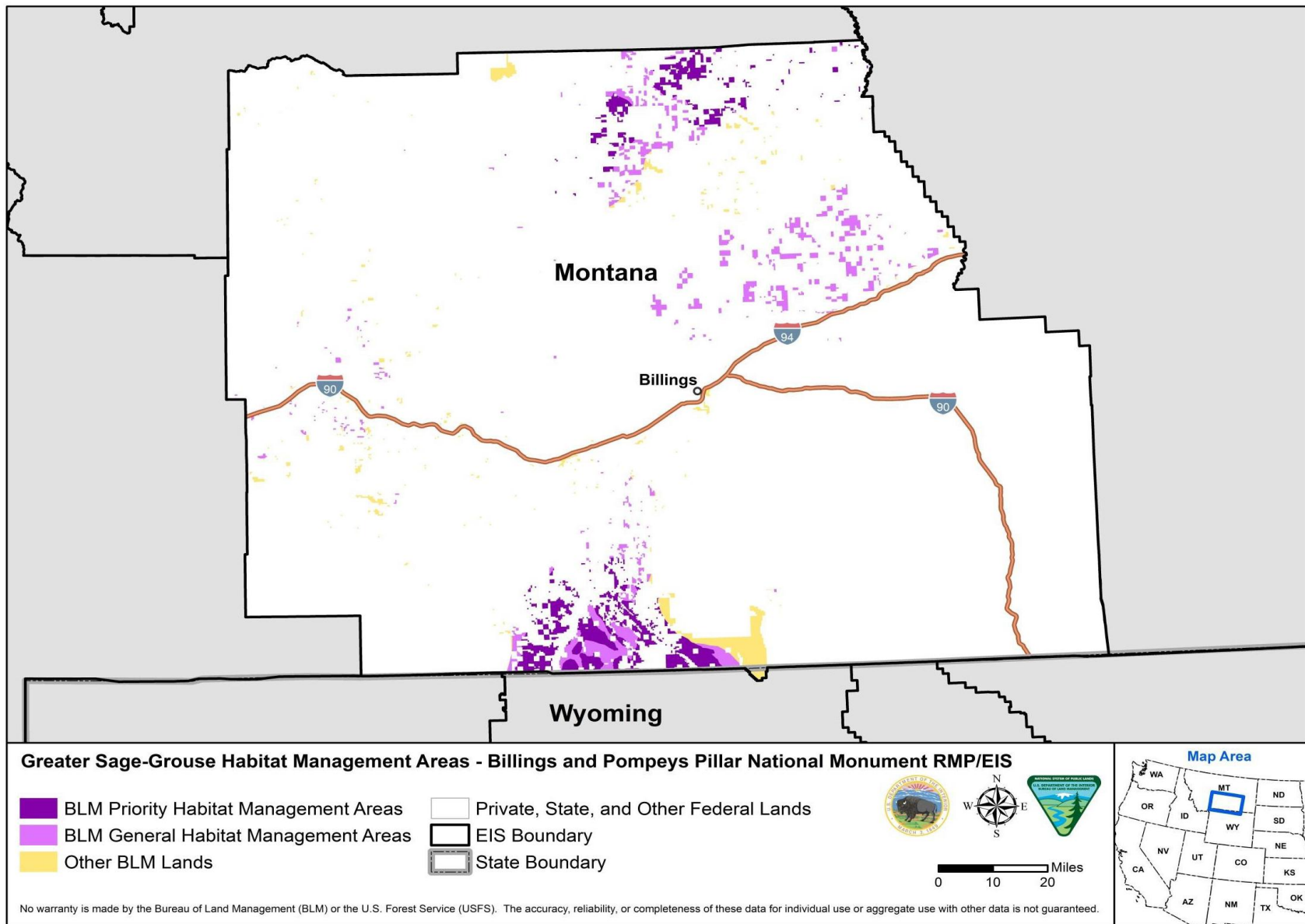
Habitat Management Areas in the Billings Planning Area		
Habitat Management Area	Acres of BLM-Administered Lands	Percent of BLM-Administered Lands in Planning Area
PHMA	158,900	37
GHMA	113,800	26
Other BLM-administered lands	161,400	37

ES.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this RMP revision project is to ensure that public lands are managed according to the principles of multiple use identified in FLPMA while maintaining valid existing rights and other obligations already established. The new RMPs will address changing needs of the Planning Area and create a management strategy that best achieves a combination of the following planning issues within the framework of the planning.

- Employing a community-based planning approach to seek broadly supported solutions to issues, and collaborate with federal, state, and local cooperating agencies.
- Establishing goals and objectives for managing resources and resource uses in the 434,200 surface acres and 889,500 acres of federal mineral estate in the Planning Area administered by the BLM BiFO in accordance with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.
- Identifying land use plan decisions to guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions.
- Identifying management actions and allowable uses anticipated to achieve the established goals and objectives and reach desired outcomes.
- Providing comprehensive management direction by making land use decisions for all appropriate resources and resource uses the BLM administers in the Planning Area.
- Providing for compliance with applicable tribal, federal, and state laws, standards, and implementation plans, and BLM policies and regulations.
- Recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber
- Retaining flexibility to adapt to new and emerging issues and opportunities and to provide for adjustments to decisions over time based on new information and monitoring.
- Striving to be compatible with the plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies and consistent with federal laws, regulations, and BLM policies; and be flexible enough to adapt to future BLM policy and guidance updates.
- Identify and incorporate appropriate conservation measures to conserve, enhance, and restore GRSG habitat by reducing, minimizing, or eliminating threats to that habitat

Figure ES-2 Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Areas – Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS



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The BLM currently administers public lands in the Planning Area according to the 1984 Billings Resource Area RMP. Although this existing plan has been amended 12 times since 1984, new data have become available, and laws, regulations, and policies regarding management of these public lands have changed. In addition, decisions in the existing plan do not satisfactorily address all new and emerging issues in the Planning Area. These changes and potential deficiencies created the need to revise the existing plan.

This RMP is needed to respond to the USFWS's March 2010 "warranted, but precluded" ESA listing petition decision (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010). The USFWS identified inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms as a significant factor in its finding on the petition to list the GRSg. In its listing decision, the USFWS noted that changes in management of GRSg habitats are necessary to avoid the continued decline of GRSg populations. Changes in land allocations and conservation measures in BLM RMPs provide a means to implement regulatory mechanisms to address the inadequacy identified by USFWS.

ES.3 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed federal action is the Proposed Plan, which identifies resource management actions in accordance with the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates of FLPMA. The proposed action is also intended to provide a consistent framework for managing GRSg and its habitat on BLM-administered lands. The alternatives, including the Proposed Plan, comprise desired future outcomes and a range of management actions, allowable uses, and land use allocations that guide management on BLM-administered lands. The Proposed Plan (see **ES.6 Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Proposed Plan and Environmental Effects**), represents the agency's approach for addressing the purpose and need.

ES.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RMP/EIS

ES.4.1 Scoping

A Notice of Intent (NOI) published in the *Federal Register* on May 15, 2008, formally announced the BLM's intent to revise the existing plan and prepare the associated EIS. Publication of the NOI initiated the scoping process and invited affected and interested agencies, organizations, and the general public to participate in determining the scope and issues to be addressed by alternatives and analyses in the EIS. The BLM held seven public scoping meetings in Pompeys Pillar National Monument, Billings, Bridger, Red Lodge, Big Timber, and Roundup, Montana, and Lovell, Wyoming in August 2008. The seven scoping meetings provided the public with an opportunity to learn and ask questions about the project and the planning process and to submit their issues and concerns to the BLM. In addition to members of the BLM Interdisciplinary Team, about 90 people attended the scoping meetings. The BLM collected comments from the public during the scoping meetings and throughout the scoping period. The final Scoping Summary Report, available online at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse.html>, prepared in conjunction with all the GRSg LUPAs, summarizes the scoping and issue-identification process and describes 13 broad issue categories identified during the scoping process.

ES.4.2 Cooperating Agency Collaboration

The BLM invited 43 local, state, federal, and tribal representatives to participate as cooperating agencies on the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS. The BLM invited these entities to participate because they have jurisdiction by law or because they could offer special expertise. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council; Bureau of Indian Affairs, Rocky Mountain Region; Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Area Office; State Historic Preservation Office (Montana); Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – Northeastern and Southern Land Offices; Montana Association of Conservation Districts; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Carbon County; Golden Valley County; Musselshell County; Musselshell Planning Project (a consortium of counties in the planning area); Wheatland County; Yellowstone County; and Big Horn County (Wyoming) are the fifteen agencies that agreed to participate as cooperating agencies in the RMP revision. The BLM and cooperating agencies participated in workshops in 2008 and 2009 to formulate alternatives and to keep cooperating agencies informed and to solicit their input. Development of this Proposed RMP and Final EIS considered comments from cooperating agencies on the Draft RMP and Draft EIS and previous administrative drafts.

The BLM invited 17 Native American tribes to be cooperating agencies as part of the RMP revision and conducted ongoing coordination, including letters and face-to-face meetings. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe requested to serve as a formal cooperating agency. Letters were posted describing the RMP/EIS process and soliciting input from the tribes and individuals. The letters also offered an invitation to meet with each tribe individually to clarify the RMP process as well as solicit concerns of tribal members. These letters were followed by a second letter again offering the same. During development of the alternatives, the 17 tribes were sent copies of Chapter 2 for their review. All documents sent to the cooperators throughout the planning process were also sent to the 17 tribes requesting their review/comments.

ES.4.3 Development of the Draft RMP/EIS

Development of Management Alternatives

In accordance with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) implementing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500), the planning team considered public input and developed a reasonable range of alternatives for the Draft RMP/EIS.

The planning team developed four unique alternatives, including one No Action Alternative and three action alternatives, which were subsequently analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. Each of the preliminary action alternatives was designed to:

- Address the 13 range-wide GRSG planning issues
- Fulfill the purpose and need for the RMP
- Meet the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandate of FLPMA
- Respond to USFWS-identified issues and threats to GRSG and its habitat, including specific threats identified in the COT report

Collectively, the three action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, and D) analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS offered a range of possible management approaches for responding to the purpose and need as well as the planning issues and concerns identified through public scoping. While

the overarching goal of the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat is the same across alternatives, each alternative contains a discrete set of objectives and management actions, which if selected as the final plan, would constitute a unique RMP.

Publication of Draft RMP/EIS

Public Comment Period

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Billings Draft RMP/EIS was published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2013, initiating the 90-day public comment period. The comment period ended on June 29, 2013. The BLM held six public meetings in Billings, Bridger, Big Timber, Red Lodge, and Roundup, Montana; and Lovell, Wyoming. A total of 190 people attended these meetings. Written public comments were reviewed and considered by the BLM.

Comment Analysis

During the public comment periods, the BLM received thousands of written comments by mail, email, and submissions at the public meetings. Comments covered a wide spectrum of thoughts, opinions, ideas, and concerns. Upon receipt, the BLM reviewed the comments, grouped similar substantive comments under an appropriate topic heading, and evaluated and wrote summary responses addressing the comment topics. The response indicated whether or not the commenters' points would result in new information or changes being included in the Final RMP/EIS. In many circumstances, public comments prompted such changes to the Draft RMP/EIS. **Chapter 5**, Consultation and Coordination, provides a detailed description of the comment analysis methodology and an overview of the public comments received.

ES.5 RMP/EIS ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

ES.5.1 Alternative A

Alternative A represents the continuation of current management under the existing land use plan (1984), as amended. Direction contained in existing laws, regulation, and policy would also continue to be implemented. This alternative provides the baseline against which to compare the other alternatives. Under Alternative A, resources, resource uses, and sensitive habitats would receive management emphasis (methods and mix of multiple-use management of public land) at present levels. In general, most activities would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, and few uses would be limited or excluded as long as land health standards would be met.

Impacts on GRSG and associated habitat could include short-term and long-term adverse habitat loss and fragmentation, species displacement due to disturbance, and degradation of habitat quality. For GRSG, recent research findings have provided updated and more accurate seasonal timing restrictions and expanded protection distances than those in Alternative A.

ES.5.2 Alternative B

Alternative B is based on the conservation measures developed by the BLM National Technical Team (NTT) planning effort described in Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. WO-2012-044. As directed in the IM, the conservation measures developed by the NTT must be considered and analyzed, as appropriate, through the land use planning and NEPA processes by all BLM state and field offices that contain occupied GRSG habitat. Alternative B would

emphasize the conservation of physical, biological, and/or cultural resources over commodity production, mineral extraction, and motorized recreation. Relative to all alternatives, Alternative B conserves the most land area for physical, biological, and cultural resources, closes the most miles of roads in travel management areas, and is the most restrictive to coal and fluid mineral leasing and the most restrictive to renewable energy development. Management actions would focus on maintaining those ecological systems that are functioning and healthy and restoring ecological systems that have been degraded or altered. Production of food, fiber, minerals and services would be more constrained than under the other alternatives, and in some cases and in some areas, uses would be excluded to protect sensitive or fragile resources.

Alternative B would establish PHMA, GHMA, and GRSG Restoration Areas. Under this alternative only, PHMA (BLM-administered surface; 154,500 acres) would be administered as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

ES.5.3 Alternative C

Alternative C would emphasize commodity production (e.g., forage and minerals), motorized recreational access, and services. Among the three action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, and D), Alternative C closes the least miles of roads in travel management areas and is the least restrictive to coal and fluid mineral leasing. Under this alternative, constraints on commodity production for the protection of sensitive resources would be the least restrictive possible within the limits defined by law, regulation, and BLM policy, including the ESA, cultural resource protection laws, and wetland preservation. In this alternative, constraints to protect sensitive resources would tend to be implemented in specified geographic areas rather than across the entire planning area.

The acreages for PHMA, GHMA, and Restoration Areas are the same as under Alternatives B and D.

Generally, the impacts on GRSG would be greater than those described under Alternatives B and D, with less protection to wildlife resources due to smaller buffers and fewer avoidance areas for ROWs and other potential development. There would be less impact on wildlife than Alternative A, with greater restrictions and areas closed to travel and other development.

ES.5.4 Alternative D (Proposed RMP)

Alternative D addresses the key planning issues identified in Chapter 1 by incorporating elements from each of the other alternatives to strike a balance between long-term conservation of public land and resources within the planning area with commodity production, recreational access, and services. Regarding the conservation of physical, biological, and cultural resources and restrictions on mineral leasing, Alternative D is generally between Alternatives B and C. Alternative D represents an approach to land management that address the issues, management concerns, and purpose and need while balancing resources and resource uses.

The acreages for PHMA, GHMA, and Restoration Areas are the same as under Alternatives B and C. Within PHMA, impacts from oil and gas leasing, development, and geophysical activities, as well as surface disturbance and disruptive activities, would be similar to

Alternative B. However, Alternative B is closed to oil and gas leasing and Alternative D is an NSO. Grazing allotments would be designated management Category I allotments.

ES.6 GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROPOSED PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In consideration of public comments, best science, cooperating agency coordination, and internal review of the Draft RMP/EIS, the BLM developed this Proposed Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management (Proposed Plan). The Proposed Plan represents the BLM's proposed approach for meeting the purpose and need consistent with the agency's legal and policy mandates.

The BLM Proposed Plan addresses threats to GRSG and its habitat identified by the USFWS in the March 2010 listing decision that apply to the Billings planning area as well as threats described in the COT report. The Proposed Plan seeks to provide greater regulatory certainty for management actions intended to conserve the GRSG (see Figure ES-2, Key Components of the Billings Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats). In making its determination of whether the GRSG is warranted to be listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, the USFWS will evaluate the degree to which land use planning decisions proposed in this RMP/EIS address threats to GRSG and its habitat.

The Proposed Plan would maintain and enhance GRSG populations and habitat. Consistent with the Governor of Montana's Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program, the Proposed Plan focuses on conserving GRSG in PHMA. The Proposed Plan benefits GRSG populations by eliminating disturbance near leks and other key areas.

The Proposed Plan establishes conditions, subject to valid existing rights, for new anthropogenic activities to ensure a net conservation gain to GRSG in PHMA and GHMA. The Proposed Plan would reduce habitat disturbance and fragmentation through limitations on surface-disturbing activities, while addressing changes in resource condition and use through monitoring and adaptive management. The Proposed Plan provides a framework for prioritizing areas in PHMA for wildfire, invasive annual grass, and conifer treatments, which will maintain and enhance GRSG habitat.

The Proposed Plan complements the Governor of Montana's Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program and the Governor's Executive Order (EO 10- 2014) by establishing similar conservation measures and focusing restoration efforts in the same key areas most valuable to the GRSG.

If the BLM finds that the State of Montana is implementing a GRSG Habitat Conservation Program that is effectively conserving the GRSG, the BLM will review the management goals and objectives to determine if they are being met and whether amendment of the BLM Proposed Plan is appropriate to achieve consistent and effective conservation and GRSG management across all lands regardless of ownership.

For a full description of the Proposed Plan, see **Section 2.3.4**.

Table ES- 2 Key Components of the Billings Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats

Key Components of the Billings Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats	
Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Proposed Plan
All Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Adaptive Management Plan, which allows for more restrictive land use allocations and management actions to be implemented if habitat or population hard triggers are met. • Require and ensure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to GRSG. • Monitor implementation and effectiveness of conservation measures in GRSG habitats according to the Habitat Assessment Framework. • Apply buffers necessary based on project type and location to address impacts on leks when authorizing actions in GRSG habitat. • Apply Required Design Features (RDF) when authorizing actions in GRSG habitat. • Prioritize the leasing and development of fluid mineral resources outside of GRSG habitat.
All development threats, including mining, infrastructure, and energy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Implement an anthropogenic disturbance cap of 3% at the Biologically Significant Unit (BSU) and project area scale. • PHMA: Implement a density cap of an average of 1 energy and mining facility per 640 acres.
Energy Development—Fluid Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Open to fluid mineral leasing subject to No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation without waiver or modification, and with limited exception. • GHMA: Open to fluid mineral leasing subject to NSO within 0.6 miles of an occupied lek and Timing Limitation (TL) stipulation from March 1 to June 15 within 3 miles of a lek.
Energy Development—Wind Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Exclusion area (not available for wind energy development under any conditions) • GHMA: Avoidance Area (may be available for wind energy development with special stipulations)
Energy Development—Solar Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Exclusion area (not available for solar energy development under any conditions) • GHMA: Avoidance Area (may be available for solar energy development with special stipulations)
Infrastructure – major Rights-of-Way (ROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations) • GHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for major ROWs with special stipulations)
Infrastructure – minor ROWs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Avoidance area (may be available for minor ROWs with special stipulations)

Key Components of the Billings Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats	
Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Proposed Plan
Mining—locatable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply RDFs to locatable minerals consistent with applicable law.
Mining—non-energy leasable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Closed area (not available for non-energy leasable minerals)
Mining—saleable minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Closed area (not available for saleable minerals) with a limited exception (may remain open to free use permits and expansion of existing active pits if criteria are met)
Mining—coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA is essential habitat for GRSG for purposes of the suitability criteria set forth at 43 CFR 3461.5(o)(1).
Livestock Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the review and processing of grazing permits/leases in PHMA. • The NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of grazing permits/leases will include specific management thresholds, based on the GRSG Habitat Objectives Table, Land Health Standards and ecological site potential, to allow adjustments to grazing that have already been subjected to NEPA analysis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize field checks in PHMA to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grazing permits.
Free-Roaming Equid Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable. Not present in GRSG habitat in the planning area.
Range Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow range improvements which do not impact GRSG, or which provide a conservation benefit to GRSG such as fences for protecting important seasonal habitats.
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Do not construct new recreation facilities.
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Only treatments that conserve, enhance, or restore Greater Sage-Grouse habitat would be allowed.
Nonnative, Invasive Plants Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noxious and invasive weed control would not occur within 0.5 mile of nesting and brood rearing areas for special status species during the nesting and brood rearing season. • Use Integrated Pest Management to make progress towards a healthy plant community.
Sagebrush Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHMA: Maintain a minimum of 70 percent of lands capable of producing sagebrush with 10 to 30 percent sagebrush canopy cover. • All BLM use authorizations will contain terms and conditions regarding the actions needed to meet or progress toward meeting the habitat objectives for GRSG.
Pinyon and/or Juniper Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove conifers encroaching into sagebrush habitats, prioritizing occupied GRSG habitat.

Key Components of the Billings Proposed Plan Addressing COT Report Threats	
Threats to GRSG and its Habitat (from COT Report)	Key Component of the Proposed Plan
Agricultural Conversion and Ex-Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRSG habitat will be retained in federal management.

ES.7 SUMMARY

Since the release of the Draft Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS, the BLM has continued to work closely with a broad range of governmental partners, including the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the USFWS and US Geological Survey in DOI, Indian tribes, governors, state agencies, and county commissioners. Through this cooperation, the BLM has developed the Proposed Plan that, in accordance with applicable law, achieves the long-term conservation of GRSG and its habitat.

Conservation of the GRSG is a large-scale challenge that requires a landscape- scale solution that spans 11 western states. The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS achieves the consistent, range-wide conservation objectives as outlined below. Additionally, the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS aligns with the State of Montana priorities and land management approaches consistent with conservation of GRSG.

Minimize additional surface disturbance. The most effective way to conserve GRSG is to protect existing, intact habitat. The BLM aims to reduce habitat fragmentation and protect key habitat areas. The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS minimizes surface disturbance on 434,200 acres of BLM-administered lands by allocating lands as PHMA and GHMA with decisions that aim to conserve GRSG habitat.

The most important aspects from the Proposed Plan that minimize surface disturbance include the 3 percent cap on anthropogenic surface disturbances in PHMA, the NSO stipulation that prohibits surface occupancy and use in PHMA, managing PHMA as ROW exclusion for renewable and solar energy exploration and facility development, and managing PHMA as ROW avoidance for major and minor ROWs.

Improve habitat condition. While restoring lost sagebrush habitat can be very difficult in the short term, particularly in the most arid areas, it is often possible to enhance habitat quality through purposeful management. The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS commits to management actions necessary to achieve science-based vegetation and GRSG habitat management objectives established in the Proposed Plan.

Vegetation treatments would be used to improve GRSG habitat. For example, treatment methods, including prescribed burning and mechanical treatments would be used to eliminate conifer encroachment and stimulate vegetative re- growth in grassland/shrub land habitats,

reduce fuels, thin under-stories, recycle nutrients, and create small openings in forested vegetation types. Prescribed fire could also be used to meet specific fuels objectives that would protect GRSG habitat in PHMA (e.g., used as a component with other treatment methods to combat annual grasses and restore native plant communities).

Reduce threat of rangeland fire to sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat. Rangeland fire can destroy sagebrush habitat and lead to the conversion of previously healthy habitat into landscapes dominated by invasive species. The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS incorporates Secretarial Order 3336 and sets forth protocols to improve the BLM's ability to protect GRSG habitat from damaging wildfire.

Within PHMA, only treatments that conserve, enhance, or restore GRSG habitat would be allowed. Prescribed fire could be used to meet specific fuels objectives that would protect GRSG habitat in PHMA (e.g., creation of fuel breaks that would disrupt the fuel continuity across the landscape in stands where annual invasive grasses are a minor component in the understory).

A fire risk assessment would be completed for implementation of prescribed fire in relation to GRSG goals and objectives. When prescribed fire is used for vegetation treatments, the burn plan would clearly indicate how COT objectives would be addressed and met by use of prescribed fire and why alternative techniques for vegetation treatment were not selected.

Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Reader's Guide

Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Montana

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Reader's Guide to This Document

Volume 1

- **Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for Action.** This chapter introduces the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS), describes the purpose and need to which BLM is responding, provides an overview of the BLM planning process, identifies planning issues and criteria, summarizes consultation and coordination, and identified topics not addressed by this RMP revision.
- **Chapter 2: Resource Management Alternatives.** Chapter 2 describes how the four alternatives (A through D) were developed, the components and content of each alternative, and discusses the alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration. It also presents a comparative summary of impacts of each alternative. Resource discussions in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are organized according to the following topics:
 - ▶ *Physical, Biological, and Cultural/Heritage Resources* – Air, Climate Change, Geology, Soil, Water, Vegetation (Forests and Woodlands, Rangelands, Riparian and Wetlands, Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds, Special Status Plants), Wildlife Habitat and Special Status Species, Fisheries Habitat and Special Status Species, Wild Horses and Burros, Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources, Visual Resources, Wildland Fire Ecology and Management, Wilderness Characteristics, Cave and Karst Resources
 - ▶ *Resource Uses and Support* – Energy and Mineral Resources (Coal, Fluid Minerals, Locatable Minerals, Mineral Materials), Forestry and Woodland Products, Realty, Cadastral Survey, and Realty (Land Tenure Adjustment and Access; Rights-of-Way, Leases and Permits; and Withdrawals), Livestock Grazing, Recreation and Visitor Services, Trails and Travel Management, Renewable Energy, Transportation and Facilities
 - ▶ *Special Designations* – Pompeys Pillar National Monument and ACEC, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range, and National Historic Trails
 - ▶ *Socioeconomic Resources* – Social and Economic Conditions, Environmental Justice, and Tribal Treaty Rights
- **Chapter 3: Affected Environment.** This chapter describes the Decision Area and the existing environmental conditions that could be impacted by the alternatives. Chapter 3 also serves as the baseline for analysis of impacts in Chapter 4.

Volume 2

- **Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences.** Chapter 4 forms the scientific and analytic basis for comparing environmental impacts of each alternative, including the No Action Alternative. Impacts generally are described in terms of direct or indirect and short-term or long-term, when applicable. Potential cumulative and unavoidable impacts and irreversible and irretrievable commitments are also discussed in this chapter.
- **Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination.** This chapter describes the public participation opportunities and the consultation and collaborative efforts made as part of the RMP/EIS revision process. It includes a summary of the issues brought forward during the public comment period, list of the commenters, and the comments with responses. This chapter also includes the names and qualifications of the people responsible for preparing this Draft RMP/EIS.
- **Chapter 6: References.** This chapter provides full citation information for all references cited within the document.
- **Glossary:** The glossary defines select terms used throughout this document.

Volume 3

- **Appendices A-X:** The appendices include documents that support existing resource conditions or situations, substantiate analyses, provide resource management guidance, explain processes, or provide information directly relevant or supporting conclusions in the Draft RMP/EIS. There are twenty-nine numbered appendices, twenty-four of which are included in this volume.

Volume 4

- **Appendices Y, Z, AA, AB, and AC:** The appendices include documents that support existing resource conditions or situations, substantiate analyses, provide resource management guidance, explain processes, or provide information directly relevant or supporting conclusions in the Draft RMP/EIS. There are twenty-nine numbered appendices, five of which are included in this volume.
- **Maps:** Maps depict the affected environment or the alternatives by resource. For hard copy versions of the document, all maps except the oversize Travel Management Area (TMA) maps are printed and found after Appendix AC. All maps, including the Travel Management Area (TMA) maps, are provided on a CD at the back of Volume 2. For CD versions of the document, maps are provided in a separate file on the CD. Electronic copies of the maps are also available on the project website:
http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office/rmp.html

